

REMARKS

The specification has been amended as needed.

The claims have been amended as to form and so as to sharpen their definition of the invention relative to the cited references.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested, for the rejection of the claims as unpatentable over BERREKLOUW in view of BOLDUC et al.

The rejection proposes replacing BERREKLOUW's fingers 11, which have a shape memory which is released by heating (see column 16, lines 30-36 of BERREKLOUW), with a finger arrangement such as in BOLDUC et al., particularly Figs. 7-9 thereof, in which an inserted member 16 spreads the fingers 30 radially outwardly.

Even if this combination were made, however, the invention as claimed would not be produced.

In the present invention, the device operates as best seen in Fig. 6, when the element 1 is moved downwardly and the fingers 11 are spread radially outwardly by that downward movement.

It is true that the spreading of the fingers radially outwardly in BOLDUC et al. is closer to the present invention than in BERREKLOUW. Nevertheless, it is still significantly different.

In BOLDUC et al., the fingers have projections 36 that are struck by member 16 in its downward movement. Opposite the projections 36 are cutouts, which direct the bending of the fingers 30 from the position of, say, Fig. 7, to the position of Fig. 8.

This is quite different from the present invention, which is substantially improved over this arrangement. In BOLDUC et al., a point of stress has to be artificially introduced into the fingers and a lever arrangement 16-36 has to be provided to swing them radially outwardly, bending them about a groove of weakness on the radially outer side of the fingers.

By contrast, in the present invention, the fingers are of uniform thickness as shown in our Fig. 6 and as now recited in our claim 20, and the fingers are gradually and progressively inclined radially inwardly as also seen in our Fig. 6, so that upon insertion of the first element downwardly as seen in Fig. 6, those fingers are gradually and progressively forced radially outwardly. There is no point of stress concentration and there is hence no risk of failure of the device. This aspect of the invention is further brought out in new claims 33 and 34.

In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, therefore, it is believed that this application has been placed in condition for allowance, and reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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